

THE HONORABLE JOHN C. COUGHENOUR

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

KENNETH WARREN RHULE and
KENNETH JOHN RHULE,

Defendants.

CASE NO. CR20-0105-JCC

ORDER

This matter comes before the Court on the parties' joint stipulated motion to proceed with Defendants' plea hearings by videoconference. (Dkt. No. 117.)

Under General Order 04-20, felony pleas and sentencings may proceed by video or telephone conferencing if "the district judge in a particular case finds for specific reasons that the plea or sentencing in that case cannot be further delayed without serious harm to the interests of justice." *See also* W.D. Wash. General Order 14-21 (Dec. 22, 2021) (extending the duration of General Order 04-20).

Having thoroughly considered the motion and the relevant record, the Court FINDS that further delay in the absence of a remote plea hearing would seriously harm the interests of justice. The following specific reasons support this finding: (1) the parties have reached a plea agreement, and not holding the hearing by videoconference or other remote means could

unnecessarily delay resolution of the case; (2) not conducting the plea hearing remotely could unnecessarily prolong the present state of uncertainty; (3) Defendant Kenneth Warren Rhule is currently located in Florida; and (4) Defendant Kenneth Warren Rhule has consented to proceed remotely, and the Government joins in the request. (*See* Dkt. Nos. 117 at 3, 118 at 1–2.)

It is therefore ORDERED that the parties’ joint motion (Dkt. No. 117) is GRANTED. The parties may contact the courtroom deputy for the criminal duty Magistrate Judge to schedule the plea hearing if they have not yet done so. The Magistrate Judge is DIRECTED to make a record of both Defendants’ consent to a remote proceeding.

DATED this 23rd day of February 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John C. Coughenour", written over a horizontal line.

John C. Coughenour
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE